

## VOTE - Voter Outreach Through Education Washington Secretary of State

### UNITED STATES AND WORLD CURRICULUM GRADES 8-12 STUDENT HANDOUT, LESSON 5

#### THEME: WHAT ABOUT OTHER NATIONS? HOW DOES THE UNITED STATES MEASURE UP TO THE WORLD?

##### ACTIVITY: ONE

As you probably know, Australia legally compels citizens to vote in national elections. Did you know that at least five other nations do the same? Find as many more as you can on your own. It is important that you record and acknowledge the sources used. You must find at least two other such nations, and there is an extra reward to those who find at least five.

##### ACTIVITY: TWO

You will be assigned an area, region or continent of the world to investigate. You are to research the voting laws of a nation in that assigned area. You might begin by looking at the Internet website of that nation's embassy in the United States. The answers may be there, or perhaps you can email the embassy with your questions. Another suggestion is to start at the United Nations website at [www.un.org](http://www.un.org).

You should inquire about qualifications and restrictions on voting, for example:

1. Who is eligible to vote, and in what elections?
2. Is there a penalty for not voting?
3. Are there restrictions based on race, color, religion, gender, literacy, ability to pay a fee, ancestry, past political affiliation, duration of citizenship, property ownership, geographic location, or past criminal convictions?

Can you probe further? Look for and record comparisons or contrasts to what was learned in Lesson Four. Look for unique features of the assigned nation's system, recent changes, or news related to voting rights and practices there. Again, be sure that you record and acknowledge the sources you used.

Share your discoveries! YOU are the teacher! Write your findings in a written report of one page, on a poster, or other medium in non-essay form. Include as part of your report a commentary (or observation points) in which you evaluate what you learned, drawing some conclusions about what level of voting democracy seems to be available in that nation in comparison with the United States.

Now, you will get to present your findings and conclusions to the class.